

Remarks/Arguments:

Preliminary Remarks

Claims 1-28 are presently pending and all pending claims stand rejected. Claims 1-28 were subject to restriction, with claims 1-15 elected for examination and claims 16-28 withdrawn from consideration. Reconsideration of elected claims 1-15 is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Objection to the Claims

Section five of the Office Action recites "Claim 14 is objected to because of the following informalities: claim 14 recites the same claim limitations as claim 9 with the same dependency and is therefore redundant as currently presented." Applicants herein cancel claim 14. Accordingly, Applicants contend that this amendment obviates the objection, and withdrawal of the objection of claim 14 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 112:

Section three of the Office Action recites "Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite..." Applicants herein amend claim 9 to provide antecedent basis in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. No new matter is added. Applicants contend that this amendment obviates the rejection, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b):

Section seven of the Office Action recites that "Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Moore, Jr. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,511,516)." Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are presently allowable over Moore for at least the reasons set forth below

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites a feature which is neither disclosed nor suggested by Moore. Claim 1 includes the following features:

forming a skirt having a main body, an expanded portion, and a shoulder between the main body and the expanded portion;

spot welding an edge portion of a plate to the skirt at a location adjacent the shoulder formed between the main body of the skirt and the expanded portion of the skirt; and

circumferentially welding the edge portion of the plate to the skirt, thereby forming a seal between the plate and the skirt

As illustrated in FIG. 2 of the Applicant's drawings, an exemplary embodiment of a skirt 46 is formed to include a main body, an expanded portion 52B, and a shoulder between the main body and the expanded portion 52B. The edge portion 42E of plate 42 is spot welded to the skirt 46 at a location adjacent the shoulder formed between the main body of the skirt and the expanded portion 52B of the skirt 46. This embodiment is described in greater detail at page 12, lines 1-10 and page 11, lines 14-19 of the Applicants' specification.

Moore fails to teach, disclose, or suggest "forming a skirt having a main body, an expanded portion, and a shoulder between the main body and the expanded portion" and "spot welding an edge portion of a plate to the skirt at a location adjacent the shoulder formed between the main body of the skirt and the expanded portion of the skirt." The skirt (32, 34), as recited in the Office Action, and as best illustrated in FIG. 1 of Moore, appears to show a reduced portion of skirt 34 circumferentially pressed inwardly from the body of the skirt 32. Even assuming for discussion purposes that the top portion of skirt 34 is formed by expanding the body of the skirt 32, Moore still fails to teach, disclose, or suggest spot welding the edge portion of plate 53 "at a location adjacent the shoulder formed between the main body of the skirt and the expanded portion of the skirt." Instead, Moore shows that plate 53 is coupled to the inner surface of the skirt 32 and both the skirt 32 and plate 53 are sealed to a bottom pan 52. Accordingly, as all claim limitations are unmet by Moore, Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 as anticipated over Moore is respectfully requested.

Claims 3-7, 9-13, and 15 ultimately depend from claim 1 and, thus, include all the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants contend claims 3-7, 9-13, and 15 are also allowable for at least the reason set forth above that claim 1 is allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 3-7, 9-13, and 15 as anticipated over Moore is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Section nine of the Office Action recites that "Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore in view of Lesage et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,722,149)." Applicants respectfully submit that this claim is presently allowable over Moore in view of Lesage for at least the reasons set forth below.

The feature that was found to be lacking in Moore with reference to claim 2 is not found in Lesage, namely, "spot welding an edge portion of a plate to the skirt at a location adjacent the shoulder formed between the main body of the skirt and the expanded portion of the skirt." Thus, Lesage fails to make up for the deficiencies of Moore. As such, the combination of Moore in view of Lesage does not disclose, teach, or suggest each and every limitation of claim 2. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 2 is allowable and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 2 as obvious over Moore in view of Lesage is respectfully requested.

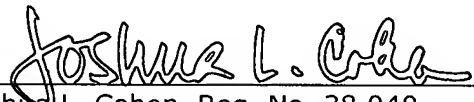
Allowable Claims

Section ten of the Office Action recites that "Claim 8 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." Applicants appreciate the Examiner's consideration of allowable subject matter.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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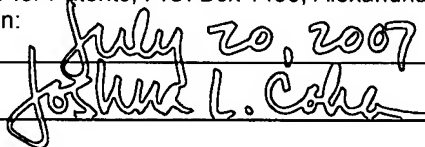
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July 20, 2007
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